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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Household Purchases of Butter, Fluid Whole Milk, and Fluid Skim Milk, December 1956



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Agricultural Marketing Service

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

PREFACE

This series of monthly reports is based on information obtained in a cooperative project financed by the United States Department of Agriculture and by the dairy industry through the American Dairy Association. The Department funds are provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

Reports in this series covering the months April 1954 through March 1956 showed estimates of household purchases and related information for butter, cheese, nonfat dry milk solids, and margarine. Starting in April 1956 the coverage was changed to include data on fluid whole milk and fluid skim milk products in addition to butter. The reporting on cheese, nonfat dry milk solids, and margarine was discontinued at that time.

The basic data presented herein were collected by the Market Research Corporation of America from its National Consumer Panel and were tabulated by it, under contract with the Department. The data beginning April 1954 are based on reports from a sample of approximately 5,800 families. Additional data on butter only for the months April 1953-March 1954 are also available. The data prior to April 1954 were based on a sample of about 4,300 families and were statistically adjusted to the level reported from the 5,800-family sample.

The estimates include only purchases for consumption by household consumers and do not reflect volume purchased by hotels, restaurants, hospitals, or other institutions.

This report was prepared in the Market Development Branch of the Marketing Research Division, Agricultural Marketing Service.

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASES OF BUTTER, FLUID WHOLE MILK
AND FLUID SKIM MILK, DECEMBER 1956

The data in this report are estimates of total purchases by household consumers only, and do not include consumption in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, or other institutional outlets. Data for a month are for a 4-week period (28 days) to permit comparisons of purchase volume between periods of equal length.

SUMMARY

During December 1956, United States household purchases of butter reached the highest monthly level reported since this series began in April 1953 and were about 1 percent higher than in December 1955. Consumers paid 3 cents more per pound for butter than a year earlier and the highest price since March 1954.

Householders bought a smaller total quantity of fluid whole milk during December 1956 than in the previous month, but substantially more than in December 1954. The December 1956 average price per quart for whole milk reached the highest level reported by householders during the April-December periods of the 2 dairy marketing years, 1954-55 and 1956-57, covered by this study. In December 1956, both the percentage of families buying fluid whole and skim milk were well above a year earlier and the percentage of families buying any fluid milk was at a record level.

Purchases of both fluid whole and skim milk in December 1956 were substantially larger than in December 1954. This is the same relationship that existed each month for the April-November 1956 period compared with April-November 1954. In addition, prices for fluid items have also been above those of the earlier period.

Butter: During December 1956, householders bought an estimated 73 million pounds of butter at an average price of 71.1 cents per pound. This quantity was the largest reported by householders during the entire period covered by these monthly reports. The December 1956 price for butter to householders was about 5 percent above a year earlier and the highest since March 1954 (table 1).

During the 9-month period, April-December 1956, householders bought over 2 percent more butter than in the same period of 1955. This increase in purchases was due mainly to a slight increase in the percentage of families buying. The December 1956 data indicated that almost 49 percent of all families bought butter, a near record percentage (fig. 2). Frequency and average size of purchase per buying family were about the same as a year earlier.

Household purchases of butter per person in December 1956 were fractionally lower than in the same month a year earlier, as were purchases in October and November 1956. The per capita rate in December 1956--0.45 pound--was at the highest level for the 9 months ending December 1956.

Compared with November 1956, butter purchases and related factors increased during December 1956. This is apparently the usual movement for this time of the year.

Fluid Milk: Householders bought 1,231 million quarts of fluid milk during December 1956, or about 5 percent more than December 1954. About 94.6 percent of this quantity was fluid whole milk and 5.4 percent fluid skim products. In December 1954, fluid whole milk represented 95.5 percent of total milk purchases and skim milk products about 4.5 percent.

The percentage of families reporting 1 or more purchases of fluid milk during December 1956 was greater than in either November 1956 or December 1954, accounting largely for the 5 percent gain in total purchases from December 2 years earlier. Almost 83 percent of all families bought fluid whole milk while 19 percent bought fluid skim products during December 1956. 1/ Compared with December 1954, purchases for whole milk increased moderately and those for skim milk products increased substantially in the percentage of families purchasing any fluid milk (table 5).

Fluid milk purchases by householders during December 1956 equaled 7.55 quarts per person, over 3 percent more than for the same month 2 years earlier. Per capita purchases of skim milk products increased 24 percent and whole milk over 2 percent (table 6).

Fluid Whole Milk: Purchases of whole milk during December 1956 were estimated at 1,164 million quarts, a gain of 4 percent over December 1954. Of the total whole milk purchased by householders during December 1956, 58.2 percent was bought in quarts, 34.6 percent in half-gallons, 7.1 percent in gallons, and only a fractional amount in other size containers (table 3 and fig. 3).

In the 9-month period, April-December 1956, whole milk purchases were over 4 percent higher than those during April-December 1954. During the same 9-month periods, the proportion of whole milk purchased in half-gallons was up sharply from 1954 to 1956, largely at the expense of a smaller proportion and quantity bought in the single quart container.

The average price per quart paid by householders for all purchases of fluid whole milk during December 1956 was 23.2 cents as compared with 22.4 cents in December 1954. Householders reported a greater increase in price between the months of December 1954 and December 1956 for purchases of fluid whole milk in half-gallon and quart containers than for whole milk bought in gallon containers. The average price reported during December 1956 for whole milk by container size was: 18.6 cents per quart in gallons, 22.1 cents in half-gallons, and 24.5 cents in quarts.

1/ Slightly over 10 percent of all families reporting in this survey live on farms and many of these families have farm produced milk available for their use.

The quantity of whole milk purchased moved downward from November to December 1956 in contrast to the slight upward movement between the same months 2 years earlier. On the other hand, prices moved upward, while in 1954 between the months of November and December, prices were unchanged (table 2).

Households in this survey reported purchases per person of 7.14 quarts of whole milk in December 1956, an increase of over 2 percent from December 1954. During the 9 months, April-December 1956, per capita purchases increased over 2 percent from April-December 1954.

Fluid Skim Milk: During December 1956, householders purchased about 26 percent more skim milk than in December 1954. Skim milk items represented 5.4 percent of total fluid milk in December 1956 or about 1 percentage point higher than December 1954. About three-fourths of the 66.6 million quarts equivalent of skim milk bought in December 1956 was purchased in quart containers, 21 percent in half-gallons, 3 percent in gallons, and a fractional quantity in other sizes. The quantity of skim milk bought in half-gallon containers during December 1956 was reported to be almost 3 times that of December 1954 (table 4).

During the 9-month period, April-December 1956, total fluid skim milk purchases were more than 16 percent higher than in the same period 2 years earlier. On a per capita basis, purchases increased over 14 percent.

It was estimated that about 19 percent of all United States households made one or more purchases of skim milk items during December 1956, in contrast to 16.7 percent during December 1954. This increase in the percentage of all families buying skim milk largely accounted for the 26 percent increase in total skim milk purchases during December 1956 over those of December 1954. Householders paid an average price of 19.4 cents per quart for skim milk purchases during December 1956, an increase of over 3 percent from the December 1954 price. Skim milk prices during December 1956 averaged 20.1 cents per quart in single quart containers, 17.8 cents in half-gallons, and 13.4 cents in gallons. The average price per quart equivalent for skim milk sold in gallons in December 1956 was 24 percent above the December 1954 price.

There has been a gradual increase in the average price per quart for skim milk products reported by householders since June 1956. However, during June-December 1954, skim milk average price movements from month to month were mixed.

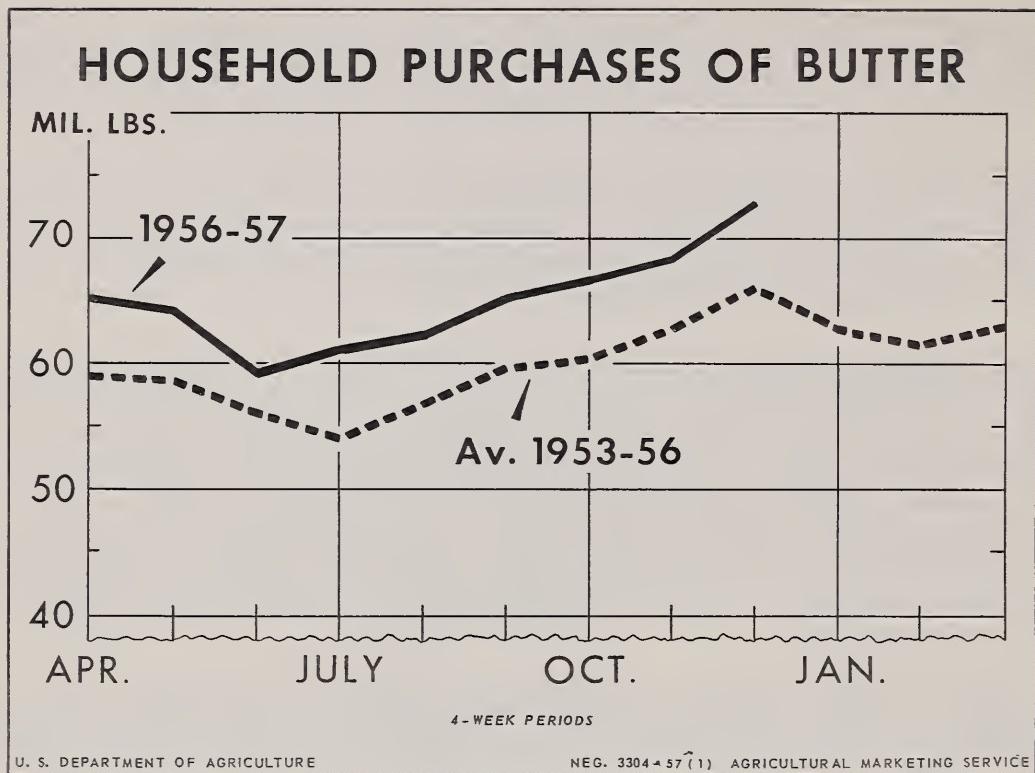


Figure 1

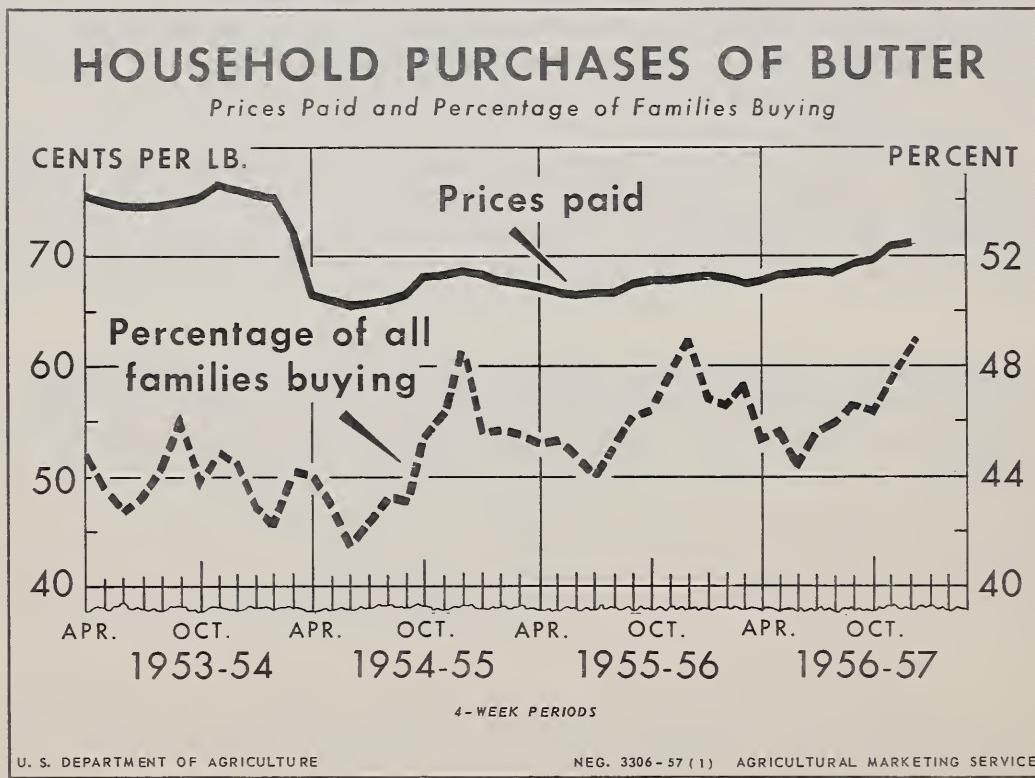


Figure 2

Table 1.--Butter: Household purchases and average price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Total				Per 1,000 population in households			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
April.....	65.1	62.7	58.0	56.2	401	388	367	369
May.....	64.2	62.2	58.5	54.7	396	385	371	359
June.....	59.3	61.3	54.5	51.9	366	380	345	340
July.....	61.0	57.0	54.2	50.9	377	356	341	332
August.....	62.2	58.7	57.9	53.3	385	366	364	348
September.....	65.2	63.1	60.4	55.1	404	394	379	360
October.....	65.8	66.0	63.2	51.0	403	409	394	331
November.....	68.1	68.0	65.7	54.4	418	422	410	353
December.....	73.0	72.4	69.2	55.5	448	449	432	361
January.....		66.2	65.3	56.6		411	407	367
February.....		67.2	63.8	53.4		417	398	346
March.....		68.3	64.0	56.3		423	399	365
.....
	Percentage of all families buying				Average price paid per pound			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
April.....	45.3	45.1	44.0	44.7	67.7	67.2	66.6	75.4
May.....	45.6	45.2	42.8	43.5	68.4	66.7	66.0	75.0
June.....	44.4	44.6	41.4	42.7	68.4	66.5	65.7	74.5
July.....	45.5	44.0	42.2	43.3	68.5	66.7	65.8	74.5
August.....	46.0	45.1	43.3	44.2	68.5	66.7	66.0	74.7
September.....	46.6	46.1	43.1	45.9	69.2	67.4	66.4	74.9
October.....	46.3	46.3	45.4	43.7	69.8	67.7	68.1	75.3
November.....	47.6	47.6	46.2	44.8	70.9	67.6	68.2	76.6
December.....	48.8	49.0	48.5	44.4	71.1	67.8	68.6	76.0
January.....		46.9	45.5	42.8		68.0	68.2	75.6
February.....		46.5	45.6	42.2		67.8	67.7	75.2
March.....		47.2	45.4	44.1		67.5	67.6	72.2
.....

(Continued)

Table 1.--Butter: Household purchases and average price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods (continued)

Period	Per buying family							
	Purchases				Quantity per purchase			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
April.....	2.66	2.64	2.74	2.71	1.11	1.09	1.09	1.06
May.....	2.63	2.60	2.80	2.75	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.04
June.....	2.51	2.60	2.72	2.64	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.04
July.....	2.47	2.45	2.65	2.58	1.10	1.09	1.09	1.04
August.....	2.52	2.50	2.81	2.67	1.10	1.08	1.08	1.03
September.....	2.62	2.58	2.86	2.69	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.03
October.....	2.62	2.68	2.84	2.59	1.10	1.10	1.09	1.02
November.....	2.61	2.66	2.88	2.65	1.11	1.11	1.09	1.04
December.....	2.71	2.70	2.66	2.68	1.12	1.13	1.11	1.05
January.....		2.65	2.73	2.90		1.10	1.09	1.04
February.....		2.70	2.65	2.73		1.10	1.10	1.04
March.....		2.68	2.67	2.75		1.11	1.09	1.04

Table 2.--Fluid whole milk and fluid skim milk: Total household purchases and average price paid per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased			
	Fluid whole milk		Fluid skim milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
April.....	1,086	1,046	68.2	54.7
May.....	1,093	1,064	67.3	53.6
June.....	1,064	1,034	65.9	55.7
July.....	1,067	1,003	65.4	55.3
August.....	1,083	1,021	64.0	59.2
September.....	1,131	1,082	63.4	61.7
October.....	1,163	1,112	64.9	58.7
November.....	1,170	1,117	63.7	55.0
December.....	1,164	1,119	66.6	53.0
January.....		1,125		54.6
February.....		1,121		58.7
March.....		1,116		61.6

	Average price paid per quart equivalent			
	Fluid whole milk		Fluid skim milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
April.....	22.2	21.9	18.5	18.8
May.....	22.3	21.6	18.6	18.5
June.....	22.4	21.6	18.5	18.4
July.....	22.5	21.8	18.6	18.6
August.....	22.7	22.0	18.8	18.7
September.....	22.8	22.2	18.9	19.2
October.....	23.0	22.3	19.1	19.0
November.....	23.1	22.4	19.3	18.9
December.....	23.2	22.4	19.4	18.8
January.....		22.3		18.8
February.....		22.3		18.6
March.....		22.1		18.5

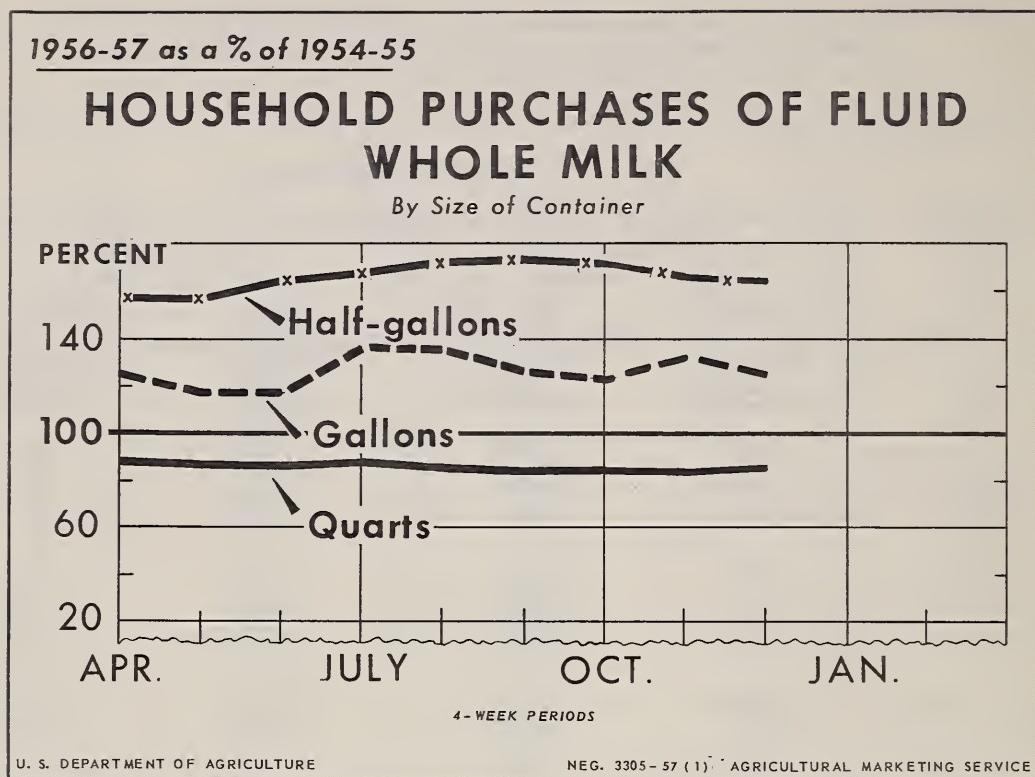


Figure 3

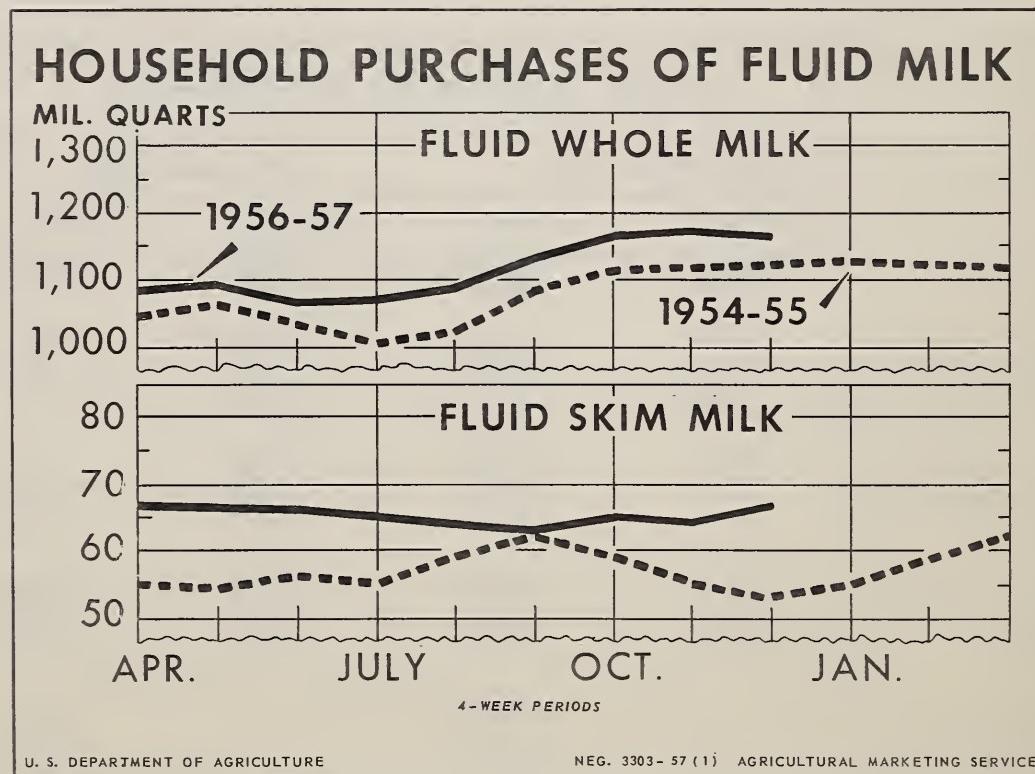


Figure 4

Table 3.--Fluid whole milk: Household purchases by container size and average price paid, per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts
April.....	691	787	321	202	72.4	57.3	1.5	0.4
May.....	690	793	330	208	72.4	62.1	0.7	0.5
June.....	663	772	329	200	71.2	60.7	0.5	0.3
July.....	651	745	341	204	73.6	53.7	0.8	0.3
August.....	653	759	356	208	73.4	54.0	0.5	0.6
September.....	674	801	379	219	77.3	61.3	0.7	0.6
October.....	687	816	394	230	81.4	66.2	0.4	0.7
November.....	683	811	405	242	81.8	62.3	0.7	0.9
December.....	678	805	403	247	82.7	66.3	1.1	1.0
January.....		800		254		69.2		0.9
February.....		790		256		74.4		0.9
March.....		783		260		70.9		1.2

Average price paid per quart equivalent

Period	Average price paid per quart equivalent							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
April.....	23.2	22.7	20.9	20.4	18.1	17.5	1/	1/
May.....	23.3	22.4	21.2	19.9	18.5	17.0	1/	1/
June.....	23.3	22.5	21.3	19.5	18.2	16.6	1/	1/
July.....	23.5	22.7	21.3	19.7	18.3	16.8	1/	1/
August.....	23.7	22.8	21.6	20.1	18.5	17.2	1/	1/
September.....	23.9	23.1	21.7	20.4	18.6	17.2	1/	1/
October.....	24.2	23.2	21.9	20.6	18.5	17.6	1/	1/
November.....	24.4	23.2	22.0	20.7	18.5	17.8	1/	1/
December.....	24.5	23.3	22.1	20.5	18.6	18.2	1/	1/
January.....		23.2		20.5		17.9		1/
February.....		23.3		20.5		17.9		1/
March.....		23.1		20.3		17.7		1/

1/ Not available.

Table 4.--Fluid skim milk: Household purchases by container size and average price paid, per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts
April.....	53.4	47.9	11.9	4.0	2.7	2.7	0.2	0.1
May.....	51.9	47.2	13.0	3.8	2.3	2.4	.1	.2
June.....	50.7	48.7	12.7	5.4	2.4	1.5	.1	.1
July.....	50.2	48.5	12.9	4.4	2.2	2.3	.1	.1
August.....	49.9	50.6	11.9	5.5	2.1	3.0	.1	.1
September.....	48.3	53.3	13.5	5.4	1.6	2.8	2/	.2
October.....	49.2	51.4	13.6	4.8	2.1	2.2	2/	.3
November.....	48.8	48.9	13.4	4.4	1.5	1.7	2/	.1
December.....	50.4	46.4	14.0	4.7	2.1	1.7	.1	.2
January.....		46.0		6.5		2.0		.1
February.....		50.2		6.4		1.9		.2
March.....		52.4		7.3		1.7		.2
Average price paid per quart equivalent								
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
	19.2	19.4	16.5	15.7	11.3	11.9	1/	1/
April.....	19.3	19.0	16.6	15.7	11.6	10.3	1/	1/
May.....	19.3	18.9	16.5	15.7	10.5	10.4	1/	1/
June.....	19.5	19.3	16.1	16.1	11.1	9.2	1/	1/
July.....	19.5	19.4	16.8	16.6	12.1	9.5	1/	1/
August.....	19.9	20.1	16.5	15.4	10.2	9.4	1/	1/
September.....	20.0	19.5	17.0	17.2	11.0	12.4	1/	1/
October.....	20.0	19.4	17.3	15.8	12.9	10.7	1/	1/
November.....	20.1	19.2	17.8	17.1	13.4	10.8	1/	1/
December.....								
January.....		19.3		16.7		12.6		1/
February.....		19.1		16.6		10.5		1/
March.....		19.1		15.9		12.5		1/

1/ Not available.

2/ Less than .1.

Table 5.--Fluid whole milk and fluid skim milk: Percentage of families buying, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Any fluid milk		Fluid whole milk		Fluid skim milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
April.....	81.8	82.6	79.8	81.0	19.4	18.7
May.....	82.8	80.9	80.9	79.5	19.2	18.0
June.....	82.0	81.6	80.4	80.1	20.0	19.4
July.....	83.5	81.1	82.0	79.8	20.5	19.3
August.....	83.6	81.9	82.6	80.5	20.7	19.8
September.....	83.2	81.4	82.4	80.0	19.6	19.2
October.....	83.6	82.9	82.2	81.4	18.6	17.9
November.....	83.9	82.7	83.1	81.3	18.8	18.2
December.....	84.3	82.6	82.6	81.1	19.0	16.7
January.....		81.8		80.2		18.9
February.....		83.2		82.0		18.7
March.....		81.9		80.3		19.6
.....						

Table 6.--Fluid whole milk and fluid skim milk: Household purchases per capita in quart equivalent, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Total		Fluid whole milk		Fluid skim milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts
April.....	7.11	6.97	6.69	6.62	0.42	0.35
May.....	7.15	7.07	6.74	6.74	.41	0.34
June.....	6.96	6.90	6.55	6.54	.41	0.35
July.....	7.01	6.65	6.60	6.31	.41	0.35
August.....	7.10	6.79	6.70	6.42	.40	0.37
September.....	7.39	7.19	7.00	6.80	.39	0.39
October.....	7.53	7.31	7.13	6.94	.40	0.37
November.....	7.56	7.31	7.17	6.97	.39	0.34
December.....	7.55	7.31	7.14	6.98	.41	0.33
.....						
January.....		7.35		7.01		0.34
February.....		7.36		6.99		0.37
March.....		7.34		6.96		0.38
.....						

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